



Fact Sheet

DPC Staff Contact: Scott McCullers PHONE (202) 224-3232 • FAX (202) 228-3432

January 17, 1997

S. 11, the *Congressional Election Campaign Spending Limit and Reform Act*

The 1996 election cycle saw record-setting amounts of money raised and spent in pursuit of Federal office. The public believes that the escalating costs of elections threaten to put a price tag on our democracy. Public support for reform is at its highest level since 1973.

The Democratic Initiative

One of Democrats' priorities this year is comprehensive campaign finance reform. At the first opportunity, Democratic leaders will introduce **S.11**, the *Congressional Election Campaign Spending Limit and Reform Act*. The bill will provide voluntary spending limits in exchange for reduced television and postal rates; restrict soft money and eliminate PACs; tighten restrictions on foreign contributions; and expand the law banning fundraising by foreign nationals. The bill also will extend election laws to cover so-called "independent expenditures" and will make those who use them take responsibility for them.

The Problem

Too Much Money

- Overall fundraising for the Democratic and Republican parties totaled \$881 million during the last election cycle (January 1, 1995-November 25, 1996). This was a 73 percent increase over the same period during the 1992 cycle. (Federal Election Commission [FEC])
- Republicans raised \$407.5 million while Democrats raised \$210 million in Federal (hard) money. Hard money receipts were up \$54.5 million, 35 percent over 1992 for Democrats. Republicans reported increases of 53 percent, \$141 million more than in 1992. (FEC)

Democratic Policy Committee
United States Senate
Washington, D.C., 20510-7050

Tom Daschle, Chairman
Harry Reid, Co-Chairman



- The Republican party collected \$141.2 million dollars in soft money, a 183 percent increase from 1992's \$49.8 million. Republicans spent \$149.6 million in soft money, an increase of 224 percent over 1992. Democrats received \$122 million and spent \$117 million. (FEC)

The Public Wants Reform

American voters today are more supportive of dramatic campaign finance reform than at any time since Watergate. A comprehensive research study undertaken in July and August 1996 by the Mellman Group shows that Americans believe that Washington's failure to address their concerns is the direct result of politicians accepting too much campaign money from special interests.

- 52 percent of respondents in the Mellman Group poll believe that our current political system is seriously flawed and that we need to make major changes in the way we finance our elections. Only 14 percent find the status quo acceptable.
- Special interest influence is voters' central concern (46 percent), with concern about the amount of spending and negative campaigning close behind (33 percent and 31 percent respectively). All of these concerns increased significantly from a similar poll taken just one year earlier.

The Time For Reform Is Now

Democrats have been fighting for comprehensive campaign finance reform for a decade. There is no need to delay any longer with hearings, investigations, commissions or studies. Over the past ten years, Congress has produced:

- 6,742 pages of hearings;
- 3,361 floor speeches;
- 1,063 pages of committee reports;
- 113 Senate votes on campaign finance reform; and,
- 1 bipartisan Federal commission.

Another day of hearings, another witness, another report, is just another unnecessary delay. Real reform means reducing the overall amount of money in our political system by limiting spending. Piecemeal reform will only redirect it somewhere else. Democrats challenge Republicans to work with them and enact comprehensive reform that ensures all Americans equal influence in the political process.